

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OMB-01 TRSE-00 IGA-02 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-05 EB-08
/074 W

-----024475 281839Z /44

R 281543Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7553
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE/ECJ-4
OJCS/J-5 WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 8876

SECDEF FOR ISA
DEPT PLEASE PASS NSC/OMB
AF/W PLEASE PASS AMBASSADOR CARTER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, LI
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM FY 1979 FOR LIBERIA

REFS: (A) STATE 297352, (B) MONROVIA 3847, (C) MONROVIA 8623,
(D) MONROVIA 4770, (E) STATE 295468, (F) MONROVIA 7623

1. SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY HAS JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT THE
PROPOSED
FMS LEVEL FOR LIBERIA TO BE CONTAINED IN THE FY 1979
CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION DOCUMENT WILL BE \$400,000 (REFTEL A).
THIS IS A REDUCTION OF \$100,000 FROM PRESENT LEVELS AND COMES IN
THE FACE OF THE MOST URGENT APPEAL FROM PRESIDENT TOLBERT (
REFTEL B) FOR A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN FMS CREDIT LEVELS. THIS
EMBASSY HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS IN
LIBERIA AS WELL AS THE INTRINSIC MERITS OF THE TOLBERT REQUEST
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ARE SUCH THAT THE U.S. SHOULD PROVIDE A MODEST INCREASE IN FMS
LEVELS. THESE SECURITY INTERESTS ARE SPELLED OUT MOST
RECENTLY IN OUR DRAFT CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION DOCUMENT FOR
FY 1979 (REFTEL C) AND IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF U.S. SECURITY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR FY 1979 (REFTEL D). WE ANTICIPATE A
STRONGLY UNFAVORABLE REACTION FROM THE GOL WHEN IT LEARNS THAT
ITS MODEST REQUEST FOR FMS CREDIT INCREASE HAS NOT ONLY BEEN

REJECTED BUT THE ACUTAL LEVEL REDUCED. IN LIGHT OF OUR CONCRETE AND SPECIFIC SECURITY INTERESTS IN LIBERIA AND CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS IN AFL MANAGEMENT, WE FEEL THIS PROBABLY UNFAVORABLE GOL REACTION TO BE JUSTIFIED. THE EMBASSY REQUESTS THEREFORE THAT THE QUESTION OF FY 1979 FMS CREDITS TO LIBERIA BE RECONSIDERED AND THAT THESE CREDITS BE INCREASED TO \$1.5 MILLION. END SUMMARY.

2. OUR REQUEST IS GIVEN ALL THE MORE POINT AS A RESULT OF THE STATEMENT OF U.S. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN LIBERIA AS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL E. THIS STATEMENT INSTRUCTS THE AMBASSADOR TO PROMOTE "A CLOSER SECURITY RELATIONSHIP" WITH LIBERIA BY MAINTAINING A "STRONG FEELING OF MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN LIBERIA AND THE UNITED STATES." IT THEN ENUMERATES THE SPECIFIC ADVANTAGES TO THE UNITED STATES WHICH ACCRUE FROM THIS STRONG FEELING OF MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS:

(A) STRATEGIC ACCESS IN TIMES OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY TO ROBERTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (COMMENT: MOST RECENTLY GIVEN IN THE CASE OF ZAIRE AND BEFORE THAT IN THE ANGOLA CRISIS);
(B) STRATEGIC ACCESS TO THE PORT OF MONROVIA WHEN IT BECOMES "NECESSARY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY;"
(C) ACCESS TO U.S. SHIPS UNDER LIBERIAN REGISTRY IN A NATIONAL EMERGENCY RECENTLY PLEDGED BY PRESIDENT TOLBERT PUBLICLY (REFTEL F);
(D) MAINTENANCE ON LIBERIAN SOIL OF A DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY WHICH SERVICES MOST OF OUR POSTS IN AFRICA AND SOME NEIGHBORING AREAS;

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(E) MAINTENANCE ON LIBERIAN SOIL OF A VOA RELAY STATION BROADCASTING TO AFRICA AND PARTS OF EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA; AND
(F) A CLOSE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. MILITARY MISSION/LIBERIA AND THE DEFENSE AUTHORITIES OF LIBERIA.

3. THE ORIGINAL GOL REQUEST WAS FOR \$6.5 M FMS CREDIT WITH NO TIME PERIOD SPECIFIED. SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH GOL DEFENSE AND FINANCE OFFICIALS MADE CLEAR THEIR UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WAS ANTICIPATED THIS SUM COULD - AND OUGHT - TO BE SPREAD OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS. DEFENSE OFFICIALS AGREE THAT THE AFL CANNOT ABSORB MORE THAN MODEST INCREASES IN MATERIEL. FINANCE OFFICIALS DO NOT WANT TO ABSORB SUDDEN LARGE INCREASES IN DEBT SERVICING REQUIREMENTS. WE RECOMMEND STRONGLY, THEREFORE, THAT THE LEVEL OF FMS CREDITS FOR LIBERIA BE INCREASED TO \$1.5M. IN REAL TERMS SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD REPRESENT LITTLE - IF ANY - INCREASE OVER THE AVERAGE CREDIT LEVEL SINCE INCEPTION OF THE FMS CREDIT PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA (\$6M FROM FY 72-77). THAT AMOUNT WOULD PROBABLY BE ACCEPTED AS A REASONABLE RESPONSE TO THE GOL REQUEST FOR \$6.5M AND BE ADEQUATE TO PERMIT CONTINUATION OF A CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO NEEDED PROGRAMS.

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TRSE-00 IGA-02 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-05 EB-08 NSCE-00
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MONROVIA 8876

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4. IF THE UNITED STATES MAKES NO RESPONSE TO THE GOL REQUEST FOR INCREASED FMS LEVELS (OR EVEN LOWERS THE LEVEL - AS ANTICIPATED), GOL DISAPPOINTMENT WILL SURELY BE KEEN. PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAS DIRECTLY INVOLVED HIMSELF IN THE ARMED FORCES REFORM AND MODERNIZATION EFFORT. HE HAS PERSONALLY APPEALED TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST HIM IN THIS UNDERTAKING AND BY APPOINTING HIS GIFTED SON-IN-LAW M. BURLEIGH HOLDER AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE HAS SIGNALLED THE EARNESTNESS OF HIS PURPOSE. SHOULD THE UNITED STATES REBUFF HIM ON A REASONABLE REQUEST FOR INCREASED FMS CREDITS, HIS OWN PRESTIGE WOULD BE AFFECTED - AND WE MUST ASSUME THAT HIS PREVIOUSLY SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SECURITY-RELATED PRIVILEGES WE ENJOY HERE WOULD BE AFFECTED.

5. WE SHOULD UNDERScore AS RELEVANT TO THIS ISSUE THE CONTINUED PROGRESS OF THE GOL IN MAKING FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS IN MANAGEMENT OF THE AFL. THE REFORMS CONCENTRATE ON PERSONNEL, POLICY AND PROCEDURES, ALL OF WHICH ARE VITAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
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ABILITY TO ABSORB THE INCREASED FMS CREDITS WE BELIEVE JUSTIFIED. THE FAILURE TO PROVIDE THE CREDIT NECESSARY TO FINANCE THE MODEST EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION HOPES OF THE GOL MIGHT JEOPARDIZE PROGRAMS WHICH, IF SUCCESSFULLY PURSUED, WOULD RESULT IN A MORE EFFICIENT ARMED FORCE ABLE TO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY.

6. AS AN ALTERNATIVE, TO INCREASED FMS WE SUGGEST CONSIDERATION OF SECURITY SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE (SSA) TO SUPPLEMENT THE THIN FMS CREDIT GRUEL. LIBERIA WOULD SEEM TO QUALIFY BY THE STANDARD PRESENTED IN THE FY 1978 CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION AS A COUNTRY "HAVING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO SECURITY, AS WELL AS OTHER PURPOSES WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE UNITED STATES' INTERESTS IN PROMOTING STABILITY AND PEACE." AN OFFER OF SSA, IN AN AMOUNT SOMEWHAT ABOVE THE PROPOSED \$1.5M FMS CREDIT LEVEL, WOULD ENABLE THE GOL TO COVER DIRECTLY LIBERIAN DEFENSE COSTS IN EXCESS OF \$400,000, AND MINIMIZE ITS IMPACT ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

7. WE NOTE FINALLY THAT FROM NOW UNTIL FY 1979 THE GOL BUDGET WILL BE UNDER PARTICULAR STRAIN DUE TO UNUSUAL EXPENDITURES NECESSITATED BY PREPARATIONS FOR THE OAU CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MONROVIA IN 1979. THE FMS CREDIT LIMITATION WILL SEVERELY RESTRICT NEEDED REPLACEMENT OF ANTIQUATED AND UNSERVICEABLE EQUIPMENT, UNDERCUTTING THE ENCOURAGING ADVANCES MADE BY THE GOL IN ACHIEVING BETTER MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE AFL. THE GOL WISHES TO MAKE THE BEST SHOWING POSSIBLE IN ALL FIELDS FOR THE 3,000 PARTICIPANTS WHO WILL BE GATHERED HERE FOR THE CONFERENCE AND JUSTIFICABLY WILL BE ANXIOUS THAT ITS MILITARY FORCE, THOUGH SMALL, APPEARS MODERN AND EFFECTIVE. IN THIS REGARD, THE USG CANNOT AVOID THAT LIBERIA CONTINUES TO BE REGARDED BY AFRICANS AS OUR SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THIS CONTINENT.

8. THIS IS A JOINT EMBASSY/USMM MESSAGE.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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